

MODULE 3:

The Christian Leader & Spiritual Formation



This module aims to communicate some aspects of the discipline in following Christ. The objectives of these different units are to introduce students to the principles and practice of the Spiritual Disciplines in examining and developing a practical development plan that will particularly encourage church plant leaders in their own personal spiritual growth.

This entire section will be structured in 6 e-learning units and each of them will include readings, online classes and discussions around significant questions in relation to the topic. The focus of these units is on understanding the root of a life with Christ, based on his model.

Unit 1: Soul Care and the believer's Heart

The concept of the *soul* and soul care is not unfamiliar either in the fields of theology, psychology or psychotherapy. Its nature has also been debated within philosophical circles for centuries. Yet concern for the soul seems to have touched numerous other realms of society today including consumers of popular psychology and spirituality to those involved in medicine and biomedical ethics. In order to address the issue of soul care, it is helpful to have some biblical and theological grasp of what is meant by 'the soul'. It also requires an awareness of the Landscape of the Heart, variously referred to as our 'inner self', heart or the seat of our emotions. Soul care requires seeking after and relating to God during life and ministry. It is about developing a deepening relationship with God and entails discovering faith, finding stability and drawing from the source of soul care, God himself.

Unit 2: Spiritual Direction

Spiritual direction dates to at least the 4th century and was practised by the Desert fathers and mothers. It has been a part of many Christian traditions throughout the history of the church and can significantly help in hearing, discerning and responding to God.

As a discipline, it has been part of the Christian tradition for centuries. We can see in the gospels how people came to Jesus because they saw that he held wisdom and they wanted to learn from his own relationship with God. The phrase spiritual direction can also be misleading because it is neither exclusively spiritual nor particularly directive. It does, however, denote that the primary director that is sought, is the Holy Spirit. The two words signify the connection between the human spirit and God's spirit and the desire of a believer to deepen their dependency upon God and acknowledge his ways so that every area of life and ministry is permeated; thoughts, motives, attitudes, values, actions, choices and behaviours being directed and under the governance of God.

Unit 3: Discipleship and Mentoring

Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations ... (Matthew 28:18-20). Obedience to Jesus' command requires both a commitment to mission and discipleship. In relation to the first unit on soul care, we are going to examine in this section on discipling and mentoring some of the characteristics of Jesus' training, equipping and caring for his disciples. Jesus as the discipler par excellence is observed through the gospels discipling his friends in the following ways: the Way Jesus Discipled.

Unit 4: The Meaning of Christian Spirituality

In this unit, we will try to give a definition and an understanding of Christian Spirituality. Christian spirituality affirms that devotion to God rather than to good works, religious duty, even Christian ministry, is central to the meaning of human life. For a number of people, talks about Christian spirituality immediately conjures up images of an activity, a discipline that must be done. There are disciplines and tools that serve a purpose, but they are not the goal. Scripture uses images and concepts to teach us about Christian

experience, several of which shed some light on an understanding of Christian spirituality. In this unit, we shall also look at the present context of the church and observe some of the streams and traditions of spirituality that can inform, enrich and inspire believers' and the church's lives, ministries and mission today.

Unit 5: Spiritual Discipline - Our Social Context

In this unit, we will explore the close relationships around us and how these relationships are essential to our well-being, security and stability in our service to the Lord. After discerning the different spheres of influence in our Christian journey (Family, Friends and Supporters and/or our social context), we will look at the present context of the church and observe some of the streams and traditions of spirituality that can inform, enrich and inspire believers' and the church's lives, ministries and mission today.

Unit 6: Spiritual Disciplines

In this unit, we see how the various spiritual disciplines that have come to us from many traditions aid our development as believers and our capacity to lead from the heart. It is indeed true that spiritual disciplines are intended for our well-being. They are pathways to bring the fullness of God into our lives. After exploring some of the disciplines we need to grow with the Lord, the concluding section will look at how a rhythm of life can help to ensure a healthy balance between work and play, responsibility and rest. Looking at Jesus' lifestyle and some of the wisdom from other Christian traditions we explore the implications and applications for our lives in leadership today.